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1924-1926 incompl

Philippine

Progress

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Philippine Progress

Published in New York by the United States Mission—
American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands

JOHN W. HAUSERMANN, *Chairman*
V. President A. C. C. of the P. I.
NORBERT LYONS
Secretary

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No. 31

Publication Office: 66 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1926

Philippines Could Produce All Coffee, Hemp And Rubber That U. S. Needs, If Developed

Coffee Growing in Philippines Planned

**Retention of Islands Necessary As Bar to Discriminatory Tariffs, Expert
Says; World's Great Future Commercial Expansion
Predicted in Pacific Area**

Coffee may be grown profitably in the Philippines, according to recent advices from Manila. If present attempts to re-introduce coffee culture in the Islands prove successful, the United States will be able to raise coffee under its own flag and thus become independent of foreign producers.

Before American occupation, coffee, mostly of the Arabian variety, was raised on a large scale in the Philippines, especially in the province of Batangas, a short distance south of Manila. At one time the Philippines produced as much coffee as Java, and the Philippine product was considered the superior. A blight struck the Philippine plantations some thirty or forty years ago and destroyed the coffee industry. Since then, however, several varieties of blight-resistant coffee plants have been developed and it is with these that attempts are being made to rehabilitate the Philippine coffee industry.

Increasing Production in Islands

Writing in the January, 1926, issue of the American Chamber of Commerce Journal of Manila, Pedro David, of the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines, states that half a dozen blight-resistant coffee varieties have been propagated in the Islands and that the production of coffee in the Archipelago is on the increase. The Philippine Bureau of Agriculture is also actively interested in the restoration of the Philippine coffee industry.

A number of planters in the Davao region of southern Mindanao have lately taken a keen interest in coffee culture. One of them, Henry Pfahl, who has had great success with hemp, coconuts, cattle and fruits, recently visited Manila and,

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If properly developed, the Philippine Islands could produce all the rubber, coffee and hemp consumed in the United States, J. M. Switzer, former president of the Pacific Commercial Company, said at a luncheon last Saturday at the National Republican Club, New York City.

Retention of the Philippines was necessary, he said, as a protective measure against the tendency of foreign nations with colonial possessions to discriminate against trade with other countries by preferential tariffs. While the greatest part of the foreign trade now took place between the United States and Europe, Mr. Switzer said, the great trade routes of the future would be between the temperate and torrid zones.

"European countries own 59 per cent of the tropical countries, 40 per cent are independent; and less than two-thirds of 1 per cent is owned by the United States," he asserted. "The tropics will be the great future sources of food supplies and raw materials, yet there are those who urge the United States to get rid of its greatest tropical possession, the Philippines."

Colonies' Trade Expands

Mr. Switzer stressed the intensive competition in international trade since the World War, one result of which was the increasing exportation of raw materials from territories in the tropical zone. Since 1917, he said, every sovereign power, the United States excepted, had experienced a trade expansion less than that of its colonies.

Encouragement of production of rubber, hemp and coffee and other foodstuffs in the Philippines not only would supply the demands of the United States, but would give this country protection against discriminatory tariffs that might be levied by foreign nations holding tropical possessions, he declared.

Rubber Grows Well in Philippine Typhoon Belt

Destructive Winds Not a Menace to Plantations, Says Expert

By A. H. MUZZALL

Mr. Muzzall was one of the members of the special commission sent to the Philippine Islands by the Federal Government to investigate the possibilities for Para rubber production in that Archipelago. He is one of the authors of the report on the subject recently published by the Department of Commerce. The following article appeared under his signature in the Manila Times of January 12, 1926:

In order to get more data on the controversy as to whether or not rubber can be grown in the typhoon regions of the Philippines, a party was organized, composed of several technical men from the Bureau of Forestry and the Bureau of Agriculture, to go to Sorsogon to study conditions on the plantation of the Alkazar Rubber Company.

The rubber plantation of the Alkazar Rubber Company is situated about twenty-eight kilometers from Legaspi, on the road to Sorsogon. This plantation was established in 1912 by Frank Hoelzl, a German. The land was cleared of secondary jungle and planted in rubber. Part of the area was inter-planted with rice for two years. The seeds were obtained from Singapore and planted in seed beds on the property.

When the trees were about six months old, they were transplanted in the field at distances varying from four to six meters. After about two years, due to the death of Mr. Hoelzl, the plantation was abandoned and the secondary jungle again took possession. The present owner, Mr. Alkazar, has started to clear up the property and bring the trees into tapping.

One Hundred Trees Per Acre

Because of the continuous rainfall during January while the party was on the property, no records of yields could be made, but over 350 trees were marked and prepared for tapping and a study made of their present condition. It is estimated that there are about 5,000 trees in an area of approximately 20 hectares (50 acres).

Naturally, these trees vary greatly in size because of lack of care. None of the trees shows a size that is expected of a twelve-year-old tree. The soil is very patchy. There are places where the growth is very good and the soil is deep. In other places, the soil is very shallow, being underlain sometimes with a layer of adobe and sometimes with basalt. Among the trees planted on the shallow soil where the tap root was not allowed to develop, we found many windfalls.

Blown Down But Still Living

The fact that these were blown over and still living instead of being broken off is evidence that the strong winds

are not as much responsible for the damage done as the poor soil conditions. The general topography of this country is rolling and good sized trees were noted on tops of knolls where they were exposed to the wind, but had not been blown over because of the well formed tap root.

The present owner has begun tapping operations and plans to make plain sheet which will be marketed in Singapore for the present. The crop is already contracted for at Singapore market prices. The Alkazar Rubber Company has sold during the last few months over 80,000 seedlings to other planters.

Rainfall Principal Drawback

The principal drawback to large plantations in this district is the continual rainfall, which lasts for several weeks at a time. The individual plantation or a plantation which requires only a few laborers, will not be seriously hindered by this continual rainfall because they can tap heavier during the periods of good weather and rest the trees during the rainy weather.

Australians Turn to P. I. for Pearl Fishing

Because of onerous restrictions and duties in their own country, Australian pearl fishers are turning their attention to the Philippines as a future field of operations. H. S. Cross, a prominent Australian pearl fisher, is ready to transfer his fleet of eight vessels to Philippine waters if assured of certain favorable conditions which are said to prevail there.

In 1924 there were 21 pearling boats operating in the Sulu Sea and adjacent waters. Pearling can be carried on throughout the year in the Philippines. Sulu pearls have brought as much as \$5,000 each, and there are said to be many untouched pearl beds in the Philippine fishing area.

Sugar Prospects Good

The Philippine Territory is potentially one of the greatest sugar-producing regions in the world, according to A. J. Keller, expert of the Cuba Cane Corporation, who has just completed a technical survey of the Philippine sugar industry for Hayden, Stone and Company of Boston, bankers and sugar brokers.

Mr. Keller found climatic and soil conditions equal or superior to those of any other sugar region in the world. Labor is cheap, he reports, and the Filipinos are born farmers, efficient and industrious in agricultural pursuits.

Coffee Growing in Philippines Planned

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on returning to Davao, took with him seedlings of Liberian coffee, which is said to be immune to blight. He plans to develop a coffee plantation, employing the same scientific methods which in his experience have proved so successful with other tropical products.

Experiments by College

Experiments conducted at the College of Agriculture, situated at Los Banos, Laguna province, near the heart of the former Philippine coffee industry, show that the cost of planting one hectare (2 1/2 acres) of second growth forest land to coffee may be calculated at about \$50. In these experiments some of the trees were left standing for shading purposes, as such protection from the sun is essential in coffee growing. The estimate includes the cost of filling and clearing the land, piling and burning the brush, lining and staking the plantation, digging holes for the seedlings, planting the seedlings and the seedlings themselves.

Three and one-half years after planting, the trees begin to bear. According to reports of the Philippine Bureau of Commerce and Industry from 1912 to 1923, the average yield of marketable coffee per acre in the Islands has been found to be 765 pounds.

Land Laws No Handicap

Coffee planting does not require so much land area as rubber cultivation, and for this reason the legal limitations on the purchase and lease of public lands in the Islands are not a handicap to coffee culture on a large scale. Besides, the best coffee lands are near Manila in a region that enjoys excellent transportation facilities to and from the capital and principal seaport.

